

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:
 - inserting an expander member into said airway and positioning an active portion of said expander member in an interior of said airway and external to a tissue of said pharyngeal wall and in opposition to an airway-defining tissue of portions of said wall to be treated;
 - activating said expander member to urge against said airway-defining tissue of said portions to urge said portions to an outwardly displaced position;
 - treating said portions to retain said portions in said outwardly displaced position following deactivation of said expander member;
 - deactivating said expander member while leaving said portions in said outwardly placed position; and
 - removing said expander member from said airway.

2. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to claim 1~~ for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:
 - inserting an expander member into said airway and positioning an active portion of said expander member in an interior of said airway and external to a tissue of said pharyngeal wall and in opposition to an airway-defining tissue of portions of said wall to be treated;
 - activating said expander member to urge against said airway-defining tissue of said portions to urge said portions to an outwardly displaced position;
 - deactivating said expander member while leaving said portions in said outwardly placed position;
 - removing said expander member from said airway; and

wherein said activating of said expander member creates an area of compressed tissue of said patient adjacent said portions and said method further comprising injecting a biocompatible tissue stabilizer into said compressed tissue while said portions are in said outwardly placed positions.

3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 2 wherein said tissue stabilizer is an adhesive and said removing of said expander member occurs after at least initial setting of said adhesive.

4. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 2 ~~further comprising~~ wherein said tissue stabilizer is a fibrosis-inducing agent and said injecting includes injecting a said fibrosis-inducing agent into said compressed tissue to induce a fibrotic response from said compressed tissue.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 3 wherein said fibrosis-inducing agent is substantially non-biodegradable for said agent to induce a chronic fibrotic response.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5 wherein said fibrosis-inducing agent is a bolus of particulate material.

7. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to claim 1 further comprising~~ for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:

inserting an expander member into said airway and positioning an active portion of said expander member in an interior of said airway and external to a tissue of said pharyngeal wall and in opposition to an airway-defining tissue of portions of said wall to be treated;

activating said expander member to urge against said airway-defining tissue of said portions to urge said portions to an outwardly displaced position;

deactivating said expander member while leaving said portions in said outwardly placed position;

removing said expander member from said airway; and

injecting a fibrosis-inducing agent into said compressed tissue to induce a fibrotic response from said compressed tissue.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 7 wherein said fibrosis-inducing agent is substantially non-biodegradable for said agent to induce a chronic fibrotic response.
9. (Original) A method according to claim 8 wherein said fibrosis-inducing agent is a bolus of particulate material.
10. (Currently Amended) A method for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising stabilizing at least a portion of said pharyngeal wall against underlying structure by securing said portion of said pharyngeal wall to said structure to resist inward collapse of said pharyngeal wall, said stabilizing include treating said portion to resist inward collapse independent of a mechanical force acting against an external tissue of said pharyngeal wall within said airway.
11. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to claim 10~~ for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:
stabilizing at least a portion of said pharyngeal wall against underlying structure by securing said portion of said pharyngeal wall to said structure to resist inward collapse of said pharyngeal wall; and
wherein said stabilization includes mechanically securing said portion to said structure.
12. (Original) A method according to claim 11 wherein said stabilization includes suturing said portion to said structure.

13. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to claim 10~~ for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:

stabilizing at least a portion of said pharyngeal wall against underlying structure by securing said portion of said pharyngeal wall to said structure to resist inward collapse of said pharyngeal wall; and

wherein said stabilization includes adhering said portion to said structure.

14. (Original) A method according to claim 10 further comprising compressing said portion prior to said stabilization.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:
compressing at least a portion of a tissue of said pharyngeal wall to a compressed state;
and

stabilizing said portion of said tissue in said compressed state, said stabilizing include treating said portion to resist inward collapse independent of a mechanical force acting against an external tissue of said pharyngeal wall within said airway.

16. (Original) A method according to claim 15 wherein said stabilization includes mechanically securing said portion to a structure underlying said wall.

17. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to claim 16~~ for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:

compressing at least a portion of a tissue of said pharyngeal wall to a compressed state;

stabilizing said portion of said tissue in said compressed state;

wherein said stabilization includes mechanically securing said portion to a structure underlying said wall; and

wherein said stabilization includes suturing said portion to a structure underlying said wall.

18. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to claim 15~~ for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:

compressing at least a portion of a tissue of said pharyngeal wall to a compressed state;

stabilizing said portion of said tissue in said compressed state; and

wherein said stabilization includes adhering said portion to a structure underlying said wall.

19. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising;

an expander member dimensioned so as to be inserted into said airway with an active portion of said expander member positioned in an interior of said airway and external to a tissue of said pharyngeal wall and in opposition to an airway-defining tissue of portions of said wall to be treated;

an activator for activating said expander member to urge against said airway-defining tissue of said portions to urge said portions an outwardly displaced position;

an applicator to treat said portions in said outwardly displaced position with a treatment to retain said portions in said outwardly displaced position following deactivation of said expander member;

said expander member adapted to be deactivated while leaving said portions in said outwardly placed position;

said expander member further dimensioned so as to be removable from said airway.

20. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 19 wherein said expander member includes a fluid inflatable member and said activator includes a connection between said fluid inflatable member and a source of fluid under pressure.

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 19 for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:

an expander member dimensioned so as to be inserted into said airway with an active portion of said expander member positioned in an interior of said airway and external to a tissue of said pharyngeal wall and in opposition to an airway-defining tissue of portions of said wall to be treated;

an activator for activating said expander member to urge against said airway-defining tissue of said portions to urge said portions an outwardly displaced position;

said expander member adapted to be deactivated while leaving said portions in said outwardly placed position;

said expander member further dimensioned so as to be removable from said airway

wherein said expander member includes an injector for injecting a biocompatible adhesive into compressed tissue adjacent said portions while said portions are in said outwardly placed positions.

22. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to claim 19 further comprising for treating a pharyngeal airway having a pharyngeal wall of a patient at least partially surrounding and defining said airway, said method comprising:

an expander member dimensioned so as to be inserted into said airway with an active portion of said expander member positioned in an interior of said airway and external to a tissue of said pharyngeal wall and in opposition to an airway-defining tissue of portions of said wall to be treated;

an activator for activating said expander member to urge against said airway-defining tissue of said portions to urge said portions an outwardly displaced position;

said expander member adapted to be deactivated while leaving said portions in said outwardly placed position;

said expander member further dimensioned so as to be removable from said airway; and
an injector for injecting a fibrosis-inducing agent into compressed tissue adjacent said portions while said portions are in said outwardly placed positions.

23. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 22 wherein said fibrosis-inducing agent is substantially non-biodegradable.

24. (Original) An apparatus according to claim 23 wherein said expander member carries a bolus of a particulate material as said fibrosis-inducing agent.